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To Whom It May Concern:

As a resident of Highland Park, IL, I would like to submit this letter in support of the efforts of the Bitter Jester Foundation for the Arts and the Bitter Jester Music Festival itself.

Not only as a resident, but as a parent of a child who participated recently in the Bitter Jester Music Fest, I was surprised to learn that the financial backbone of this festival is simply the funds garnered through a raffle. I would have expected, given the quality of the music, the quality of the judges, the quality of the staff, and everything surrounding the festival, that this was something more heavily supported by the Highland Park community and the City.

For me personally, the Bitter Jester Music Festival has *created* a sense of community. Even though I had never met the other parents in my son's band, I was immediately bonded to them. Even to all those parents who had children participating on other days of the festival. In fact, the festival was one of the reasons that my son's band – Out of Pocket – was formed. They won their Friday night and ended up coming in 3rd for the entire summer. That process allowed them to work with Michael Brook – a former participant in the festival and an HP resident who has continued his musical education – to better their own music. None of these experiences or this education would have been possible without Bitter Jester.

And, while the music festival had a tremendous turnout this year, I have to imagine that what the Bitter Jester Foundation for the Arts is doing for the City of Highland Park transcends the music and the event itself. The Port Clinton area was packed with people every Friday night; people who I am sure become patrons of the surrounding businesses as a result. They were all there in the downtown square because of the efforts of the Bitter Jester Foundation.

I imagine, given the success of the 2018 festival and all the years past, that this is just the beginning of the partnership between the Bitter Jester Foundation for the Arts and the Highland Park community. I personally hope that the festival will extend beyond just June so that more people can listen to great music and so that the crowds and the community can continue to come together throughout the entirety of the summer months. This event deserves to be given help to grow and expand. I hope that more individuals and organizations in Highland Park begin to see the value that I and many other Highland Park parents see in it.

Sincerely,



David LaForce